Government of Canada | Gouvernement du Canada

News of interest to Aboriginal people from the Government of Canada

Update

Spring/Summer 2006

Communities take action to protect environment

More than 1,000 Inuit Elders and children posed for this photograph in April 2005 to bring attention to how climate change is affecting the North. Warmer temperatures, melting glaciers and loss of ice cover are affecting the lands, human health, animals and infrastructure that are important to First Nations, Inuit and Métis lifestyle and culture across Canada.

That's why the Government of Canada is working with Aboriginal and Northern communities to take action on climate change and adapt to the changing environment. Learn more at these websites:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/clc
www.climatechange.gc.ca
http://adaptation.nrcan.gc.ca
www.c-ciarn.ca

PHOTO: DAVID CAMBS/SPECTRAL Q

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Green energy powers community and economy

Imagine meeting your community's energy needs, while taking care of the environment.

Last fall, that dream became a reality for **Hupacasath First Nation** in British Columbia. They are leading the development of a hydro-electricity plant that will give power to their entire community, as well as 6,000 homes on Vancouver Island—without hurting the environment. Their partners include Ucluelet First Nation, the City of Port Alberni and Synex Energy.

"Doing a green project like this is very exciting," says Chief Councillor Judith Sayers.

The plant will use water power from a creek to produce "green" energy. It's called green energy because it will not disturb fish habitat or pollute the air or water. That means reducing the greenhouse gases that lead to climate change.

"Doing a green project like this is very exciting," says Chief Councillor Judith Sayers. "We wanted to help address the huge energy shortage on Vancouver Island in a way that is in keeping with our community's traditional values."

The project will also create profits and jobs for the entire community.

Recognizing these long-term benefits, the Government of Canada's **Aboriginal and Northern Community Action Program** has given financial and technical support to the project. This program works in partnership with First Nations and Inuit communities to develop sustainable sources of energy and take action on climate change. It is managed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, with technical support from Natural Resources Canada. Find out more by visiting the Internet at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/dc or calling toll-free 1 800 567-9604.

Judith Sayers, Chief Councillor of Hupacasath First Nation

2008-02417/

TAKING CARE OF THE CARIBOU:

Community action helps protect animals at risk

Federal programs for energy-efficient buildings

Saving energy means saving money—and protecting the environment. The Office of Energy Efficiency at *Natural Resources Canada* can provide tools, services and financial incentives to help improve the energy efficiency of businesses, organizations and homes. These services are available to First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada.

For businesses and organizations:

- *EnerGuide for Existing Buildings provides publications, training and tools. Members can also apply for Energy Retrofit Assistance funding to plan and put projects in place. Aboriginal, Northern and remote organizations get special consideration and may be eligible for additional funding.*
- *The Commercial Building Incentive Program offers funding to design new energy-efficient buildings, including Band offices, schools, hospitals and cultural centres.*

For more information go to the website www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca/buildings **or call toll-free** 1 877 360-5500.

For housing:

- *EnerGuide for Houses can help reduce energy costs by making new and existing homes in your community more energy efficient. Natural Resources Canada is looking for Aboriginal service organizations to deliver the program in areas such as Nunavut, Nunavik and other remote areas.*

For more information go to www.energuideforhouses.gc.ca **and click on "homeowners," or call toll-free** 1 800 387-2000.

For centuries, the White River First Nation has shared its homeland with the Woodland Caribou on the Yukon-Alaska borderlands. Today, the herd is getting dangerously small and is at risk of dying off.

That's why the community is taking action to protect the caribou—and preserve their traditional lifestyle and culture.

"We traditionally hunted the caribou for food and skin. Now the community is involved to bring back the caribou population from dying off," says Dwayne Broeren. He is White River's Game Guardian Custodian and a member of the Northern Tutchone.

In 2003, they helped launch the **Chisana Caribou Recovery Project** in partnership with the Yukon Government and environmental groups. Their goal is to increase the number of caribou by making sure that more calves survive.

Every spring, a team of experts and scientists bring the pregnant mothers to a fenced-in area where they give birth to their calves in safety. A few months later, when the calves are strong enough to outrun their predators, they are released back into the wild.

"You can't help but get attached to the mothers and babies. It is rewarding to see them leave the fence and have a fighting chance to survive," says Dwayne.

The project is very successful. 75 percent of the calves born in captivity survive. Only 13 percent of those born in the wild would survive.

More caribou calves are surviving thanks to the Chisana Caribou Recovery Project.

PHOTO: MICHELLE DAVEY, YUKON GOVERNMENT

Last spring, Dwayne Broeren (far right) helped capture 50 pregnant caribou and take care of their newborn calves.

The community is also teaching local students about the project—and inspiring a future generation of environmentalists.

"We brought a group of students to see the caribou and learn about the project. Some may decide to become biologists, or even fly helicopters," says Dwayne.

The Government of Canada has given financial support to this project through the **Habitat Stewardship Program**, which is managed by Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada Agency. This program funds Aboriginal environmental organizations, Aboriginal groups and others for projects that promote the conservation and protection of species at risk and their habitats.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Habitat Stewardship Program:
www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih

Species at risk:
www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca

The Chisana Caribou Recovery Project:
www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/stellas/caribou

Taking action on contaminated sites

The Government of Canada is continuing to invest the money needed to take immediate action at high-priority federal contaminated sites across Canada.

In 2005-2006, through the **Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan**, the federal government invested more than $150 million to address 97 high-priority sites, and conduct technical assessments to determine next steps at about 500 other sites across Canada. This is part of $3.5 billion of long-term funding committed in the 2004 Federal Budget.

That means more resources to address contaminated sites that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is responsible for on reserve lands and in the North. The Department is already stepping up its work at several high-priority sites. The priority at all of these sites is to protect human health and the environment, and to create economic and job opportunities for First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Northerners. For example:

- In Manitoba, $4.2 million has been dedicated to clean up two contaminated sites at Barren Lands First Nation and Bunibonibee Cree Nation. Work is underway at both sites, creating jobs and economic benefits for community members.
- In Nunavut, four contracts have already been awarded, totalling $31.8 million, to take action right away on two contaminated sites–CAM-F Sarcpa Lake on the Melville Peninsula and FOX-C Ekalugad Fiord on Baffin Island. Three of the four contracts were awarded to Inuit-owned companies. This is creating jobs, training and economic opportunities for Inuit in the region.

The federal government is responsible for more than 4,000 contaminated sites in Canada. These sites are contaminated by substances that might pose a risk to human health and the environment, and are in places like abandoned mines, airports, military bases and reserve lands.

The federal government is committed to addressing these existing sites, and keeping new sites from being contaminated.

Find out more:

Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan:
www.ec.gc.ca/press/2005/050802_n_e.htm

Federal Contaminated Sites Inventory:
www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fcsi-rscf/fcsi-rscf_e.asp

Northern Contaminated Sites Program:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/nap/constr/index_e.html

Progress on contaminated sites

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is responsible for managing and cleaning up contaminated sites on reserve lands and in the North. To date, the Department has:

- *closed or cleaned up more than half of the contaminated sites on reserve lands and in the North; for example, in the Yukon, 646 out of 890 contaminated and hazardous waste sites have been cleaned up;*
- *invested about $10 million a year to assess and clean up sites on reserve lands; and*
- *invested about $65-70 million a year to address sites in the North, where contaminated sites are more complex to clean up.*

Clean up complete at Resolution Island

Considered one of the largest contaminated sites in Nunavut, Resolution Island has just wrapped up its final year of clean up. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is responsible for the site, which was contaminated by 20 years of military operations. The Inuit-owned Qikiqtaaluk Corporation led the clean-up project, which has created employment and training for Inuit workers and generated over $15 million worth of business opportunities in Nunavut. For more information, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nu/nuvcts_e.html.

Aboriginal organizations building environmental expertise

Aboriginal organizations and communities are working together to develop their environmental expertise, and to increase their capacity to design and deliver environmental programs to their members. *Indian and Northern Affairs Canada* is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities and organizations to meet this goal, and is currently supporting these new projects:

- *The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) is developing an environmental excellence vision that is shaped by First Nations, for First Nations. This vision will create a plan for the CIER to better meet the environmental needs of First Nations communities. For more information, contact CIER at 1 204 956-0660 or at www.cier.ca.*
- *The Indigenous Cooperative on the Environment is a new network that gives information, technical help and traditional knowledge on environmental issues to Aboriginal communities, organizations and environment workers. For more information, go to www.ice-network.ca.*
- *INAC's new Reserve Land and Environment Management Program will give First Nations communities the tools and training to build knowledge and skills in land and environmental management. Currently being piloted in 16 communities, the program is designed to help them exercise greater control over land and environmental management decisions.*

Increased benefits for seniors with a low income

If you are an Aboriginal senior, you should know that benefits for low-income seniors increased in January 2006.

The Old Age Security (OAS) program pays benefits to most people over 65. In addition to the monthly OAS benefit, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) helps low-income seniors meet their day-to-day needs.

For seniors who qualify for the GIS there is good news—the Guaranteed Income Supplement increased by about $18 a month for single people and by about $29 a month for couples on January 1, 2006. It will increase by the same amount again on January 1, 2007.

There are more benefits under the OAS program. If you are between 60 and 64 and have a spouse or common-law partner who is eligible for the GIS, you may qualify for the **Allowance**. If you are between 60 and 64 and your partner has died, you may be entitled to the **Allowance for the survivor**. These benefits also increased in January 2006.

You must apply to receive these benefits.

To find out more about Old Age Security and benefits for seniors with a low income, visit www.sdc.gc.ca, or call:
Toll-free: 1 800 277-9914
TTY: 1 800 255-4786

Keeping the Memory Alive: Aboriginal Veterans and Youth Take Part in Spiritual Journey

In November, First Nations, Métis and Inuit spiritual leaders, veterans and youth traveled to the battlefields of Europe on the Aboriginal Spiritual Journey. Youth delegate Jasmine Poitras-John from Alberta said the trip was an opportunity to "learn more about the war and the sacrifices of our brave soldiers." She is seen here with her great-grandfather Métis Veteran Lloyd Poitras at a war memorial in France. View youth diaries, photos and more at www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/subsection.asp?id=1111&lang=e.

Best practices in Aboriginal tourism

A new Government of Canada publication—*Kôkiʼ Kakiʼ Land of the Cariboo*—highlights best practices in Aboriginal tourism in 13 communities in northwestern Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan. The publication is designed to inform, inspire and assist other Aboriginal and rural communities as they work to develop their tourism potential. To order a copy, call toll-free 1 800 567-9604.

UPDATE is going to take a break!

During the next few months, *Update* is going to take the opportunity to have a little down time. We will take a look at what works about *Update* and what we might like to change to better serve all our audiences. We expect to be back in 2007, with a newsletter that will continue to serve your needs, and at the same time provide a broader range of information of interest to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis audiences.

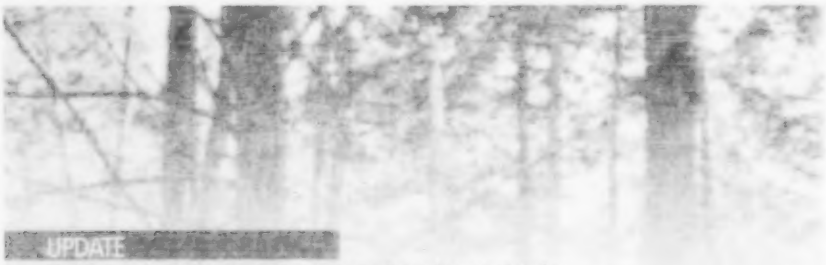
As always, we are happy to receive your comments and suggestions. On the last page of this issue you will find a reply card and e-mail address to reach us. We encourage you to take the time to let us know how you think *Update* could be improved and reach a larger audience.

Sisters in Spirit: Working together to address violence against Aboriginal women

The Native Women's Association of Canada is leading a new initiative to address violence against First Nations, Métis and Inuit women in Canada.

Through the **Sisters in Spirit initiative**, the **Native Women's Association of Canada** will work with other Aboriginal women's organizations and the Government of Canada to address violence that First Nations, Métis and Inuit women face because of racism and gender discrimination. This type of violence usually happens outside of the home, and is often against those most vulnerable.

The Government of Canada is providing $5 million to support this five-year initiative. Visit www.sistersinspirit.ca for more information.



UPDATE

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You can read ***Update*** on the internet at:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/update/index_e.html

You can subscribe or send your comments to *Update* using the attached postage-paid reply card, or by:

E-mail: Update@inac.gc.ca
Fax: (819) 953-7385
Telephone (toll-free): 1 800 567-9604 or TTY/TDD: 1 866 553-0554

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Website: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca
E-mail: infopubs@ainc-inac.gc.ca
Telephone (toll-free): 1 800 567-9604 or TTY/TDD: 1 866 553-0554

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THE EDITOR UPDATE
INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA
RM 1900
10 WELLINGTON ST
GATINEAU QC K1A 0H4

Meet the Minister

Jim Prentice was elected to the House of Commons in 2004 and was re-elected in 2006. He has served as Critic for Indian Affairs and Northern Development and been a member of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

A lawyer by profession, Mr. Prentice has specialized in property rights and has focused on relocations, environmental protection suits and restricted development areas. He also served as a commissioner of the Indian Specific Claims Commission of Canada for 10 years and is recognized by his peers as an expert in land claims negotiations. Mr. Prentice travelled to South Africa twice as an expert adviser on how to protect property rights in that country's new constitution.

Mr. Prentice is married to Karen and they have three daughters.

We would like to receive your comments and suggestions about Update.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Did you find this issue informative? ☐ yes ☐ no

Comments: _____

What topics would you like to see covered in future issues?

Comments: _____

☐ Send Update to my address listed above.

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